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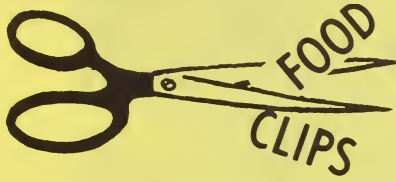
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 17, 1975



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Dough or batter? Any mixture thick enough to be rolled or kneaded is called a "dough." If it is thin enough to pour or drop from a spoon then it is known as a batter.

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Successful baking? You need to use exact measurement of ingredients, the right tool and the right method.

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Need yeast for baking? It comes in two forms--dry granular and compressed. The packages usually are dated, and, for best results, the yeast should be used before the expiration date.

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Remember, muffins should be mixed only until the dry ingredients are moistened. Overmixing results in a poor texture with large holes and tunnels.

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Sponge cake batters are beaten well to incorporate air as an aid in leavening. The batter must be handled gently and baked immediately to retain the air until the oven heat sets the food in the desired shape.

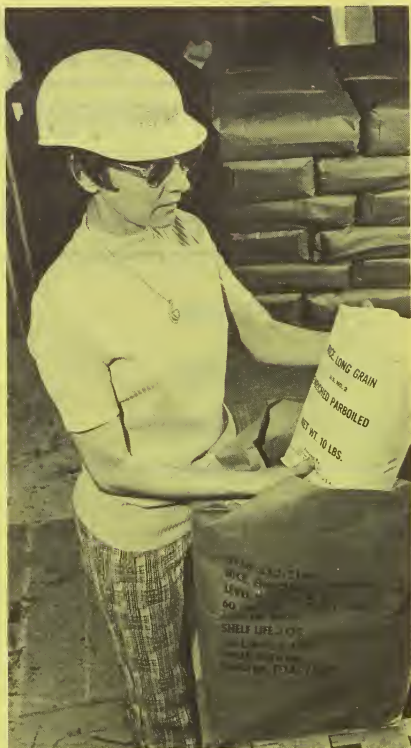
ON GROWING FRUIT

on the
Grape
vine - -

American bunch grapes are one of the most popular and extensively grown fruits for home planting--and are also an important commercial fruit. They're easy to grow, bear fruit early and regularly, and are small but long-lived plants. Insects and diseases are unusually easy to control.

Why grow grapes? Versatility of the fruit may be the best reason, perhaps--grapes are good for eating--out-of-hand, for wine, juice, jams, jellies, and frozen products.

Three-fourths of the states produce American bunch grapes, primarily the Concord variety. They're grown in many different soils. The fertile, deep, and well-drained loams are best--but soils that contain sand, gravel, shale, slate, or clay can be used. Avoid extremely wet or extremely dry soils. Vine growth is usually improved by organic matter in the soil.



Rosemary Pollingue, said to be the nation's only woman rice grader, checks rice in Houston, Tex., area mill.



Sharron Ray grades fresh fruits and vegetables in Wenatchee, Wash.



Mary Gagner is busy grading beef in a Chicago, Ill. packing plant.

ON THE DISTAFF SIDE...in Food Grading

Few women (by number) have joined the ranks of "food graders" in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but, for those who have -- they have found the work in a field long sought after by men, to be just right for them. Their specialities -- the same as for men -- range from grading rice to ducks. The people who follow these careers are experts in their field. The women who pursue these careers -- and the men -- in USDA's grading force -- certify the quality of over 50 percent of our beef, turkey, chicken, and other poultry products, butter, and fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Who becomes a "food grader" at USDA? Graduates in the field of home economics, animal science and chemistry -- and some with working experience in other areas -- join USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. In the Northwest, a former physical education instructor now grades fresh and frozen vegetables. In the midwest, an egg grader-in-charge is responsible for plant sanitation and certifying the quality of eggs. In a regional grading lab in Florida, a distaffer checks consumer tastes on orange juice samples. A poultry grader-in-charge works at one of the Nation's largest duck slaughtering and processing plants in Indiana. In Chicago, Illinois, a distaffer works as a beef grader at a packing plant. The locations are nationwide, the opportunities almost endless.

USDA grading services are available on request and for a fee to cover the cost. Many growers, processors, retailers, and institutional buyers use these services as an aid in quality control, buying and selling.

The grading process used for each product is different. Since no two foods are exactly the same, the grading procedures vary. "Eating quality" of beef, for example, is based on the color, firmness, texture, and marbling in relation to its maturity (or age). Poultry is graded for quality on the meatiness and finish of the bird, as well as freedom from defects such as cuts, tears, and bruises.

More

On the Distaff Side

Fruits and vegetables are rated on still other values -- color, shape, size, maturity, and number and degree of defects. Flavor and tenderness are also quality factors for some fruits and vegetables. Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are also graded for such quality factors. Grading patterns for the same product, however, are the same nationwide.

What does the grade mean? For the consumer, the grade is assurance that the food's quality has been certified by an experienced, unbiased USDA grader. For the merchandiser, it is a basis for pricing in the market place -- as well as a service to the consumer in selecting the product.

FOOD SAFETY MATERIALS

AVAILABLE TO THE MEDIA -- Free on request.

"Keep it Hot, Keep it Cold, Keep it Safe" -- the new Food Safety kit prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture with all the cans and cannots for canners is now available to the media. A series of USDA publications have been put together in this kit in order to provide information for the home canning season. Other information includes basic rules for food safety, and the temperature guides for safe food preparation, storage and use. Details on the cold facts on freezing foods is also available. A bibliography for additional material is provided in the folder. Write to the Editor of Food and Home Notes for your Press Kit (folder) -- only available to the working press.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.
